

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am returning Senate Bill 499 without my signature.

While I share the author's concern about the significant impact a hospital closure has on a local community, the report required by this bill will not stop a hospital from closing. SB 499 would force distressed facilities to divert scarce resources away from the critical functions of providing care and keeping the hospital doors open and instead use those resources to draft a report that would be of limited value to the community. While such a report may provide more information to the county and the local emergency medical service agency, it will not change the underlying problem that is leading to the decision to eliminate or terminate service and it lacks any enforcement mechanisms. Current law already requires hospitals that are reducing or eliminating their provision of emergency services to provide at least 90 days' notice to the State, county, and the general public. Moreover, current law also requires counties to provide the State Department of Health Services an impact report any time a hospital decides to reduce or eliminate emergency services, thereby making this bill somewhat duplicative.

This legislation does not fix the problem it is trying to address and would not prevent a hospital from closing.

For these reasons, I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger